

Employment Retention Services Assessment

This assessment is a framework to evaluate and enhance the strategies you use to help program graduates retain employment. This framework will help you determine the extent to which your project is employment retention-focused and provides a wide range of strategies for improving employment retention outcomes. While employment retention may be the final milestone in a participant's involvement with your training program, your employment retention efforts need to be integrated into every phase of your project's services.

Look for trends within each category; if you're checking off more "no's" than "yes's" in a particular category, this may be an indication of the need to improve your services in that area and request related technical assistance.

March 1, 2016



A. Strategy for Meeting Employment Retention Objectives

Employment retention services begin the very first day you have contact with a program participant and must be integrated into all phases of your program. Each staff person should understand the role they play in helping graduates retain employment and be aware of the project's employment retention objectives. To ensure accountability, employment retention outcomes should be tracked and reported to all project staff members on a regular basis. The following action items will help you determine the extent to which your project has the proper employment retention focus and will provide you with several strategies for integrating employment retention services into all phases of your program.

Action Item	Completed		
	Yes	No	N/A
1. Review the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA), project proposal, and statement of work to confirm the employment retention commitments made by your program			
2. Develop a plan to guide employment retention activities that includes:			
a. employment retention goals for each month or quarter of the project			
b. a mechanism for tracking employment retention outcomes and reporting those outcomes to project staff and partners			
c. strategies that will be used to maintain contact with program graduates			
d. the support services you will provide graduates either directly, through partnerships, or by referral			
e. A mechanism for using employment retention data for continuous quality improvement			
3. Staff job descriptions reflect a focus on employment retention			
4. Marketing materials reflect a commitment to employment retention			
5. Supervisors and all grant-funded staff understand and track employment retention outcomes			
6. Summary reports on employment retention are provided to staff on a regular basis			
7. Schedule performance review meetings on a regular basis and at appropriate intervals			

Assessing Your Responses: If you have checked any “No” boxes in this section, you should consider developing an employment retention plan or revising an existing one and making the adjustments required to ensure that employment retention services are incorporated into all phases of your programming.

B. Pre-Employment Guidance

Program graduates are more likely to retain employment if they receive a thorough assessment upon intake and any identified barriers to employment retention are removed prior to employment. If required, pre-employment guidance and soft-skills instruction are provided.

Action Item	Completed		
	Yes	No	N/A
1. Assessment practices ensure that potential barriers to successful employment retention are identified during intake			
2. Case management notes include an appropriate action plan for overcoming any identified barriers to employment retention			
3. Soft-skills instruction curriculum includes:			
a. guidance on work ethics (getting to work on time, calling in sick only when necessary, producing quality work, completing tasks on schedule, being a team player, learning new skills and accepting new responsibilities, accepting performance feedback appropriately, being ethical at all times, etc.)			
b. interpersonal skills instruction (communicating clearly and effectively, requesting assistance when needed, participating actively to solve problems, coping with difficult supervisors and coworkers, projecting a positive attitude, etc.)			
c. guidance on preparing for and anticipating the demands of work			
d. guidance on dealing with intergenerational differences in the workplace			
4. Successful completion of soft-skills preparation services is properly documented in each participant file			
<p><u>Assessing Your Responses:</u> If you have checked any “No” boxes in this section, you may want to consider improving the way your project prepares participants for employment. This may include reviewing assessment practices, enhancing pre-employment instructional curricula, and developing mechanisms for measuring and documenting pre-employment competencies.</p>			

C. Support Services

To ensure that your graduates successfully adapt to the workplace and stay employed, they may require access to resources beyond those provided directly by your program. Program staff must be prepared to make referrals to the appropriate resources through referral.

Action Item	Completed		
	Yes	No	N/A
1. Develop partnerships with community-based organizations that can provide participants assistance with:			
a. financial challenges			
b. healthcare			
c. childcare			
d. transportation			
2. Enlist the support of project alumni in your employment retention efforts			
3. Engage volunteer mentors			
4. Familiarize project staff members with motivational interviewing techniques that can be used to respond to signs of impending job loss such as loss of enthusiasm, chronic lateness, failure to make work a priority, lack of confidence, etc.			
5. Encourage participants to contact staff when a work problem is anticipated or occurs			
6. Provide the flexibility and capacity to respond to urgent requests for assistance outside of normal working hours			

Assessing Your Responses: If you have checked any “No” boxes in this section, you may want to consider reviewing and strengthening your partnerships with community-based agencies, the mechanisms used for making referrals, and the support you provide to program graduates.

D. Tracking and Follow-Up

Maintaining close contact with program participants following graduation is essential for achieving employment retention outcomes. The use of a variety of methods helps maintain contact and offers multiple opportunities for providing timely guidance and assistance.

Action Item	Completed		
	Yes	No	N/A
1. Use a variety of methods to stay in touch with program graduates that include:			
a. telephone calls			
b. e-mail and regular mail			
c. texting			
d. social media			
e. celebratory events			
f. privately funded incentives			

g. networking gatherings			
h. online surveys			
i. newsletters			
j. a job club			
k. mentors			
l. workshops			
<p><u>Assessing Your Responses:</u> If you have checked any “No” boxes in this section, you may want to consider expanding the range of outreach methods used to engage and track program graduates.</p>			
<p>E. Career Advancement Planning</p>			
<p><i>To ensure long-term employment retention of the job, program graduates must be prepared to advance in their careers. All program participants began the career planning process when they entered your program. Career advancement planning provides them with a structure for continuing that process as they begin their new jobs.</i></p>			
Action Item	Completed		
	Yes	No	N/A
1. Career advancement planning is provided to program graduates			
2. Program graduates are provided with a structure for gathering the required information, drafting an individual career plan, reviewing the plan with a mentor for feedback, and making the appropriate adjustments over time			
3. Program graduates are provided with a template for creating that plan			
<p><u>Assessing Your Responses:</u> If you have checked any “No” boxes in this section, you may want to consider providing program graduates with career advancement planning assistance.</p>			